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# STATE OF INDIANA

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DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE



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## **Department of Local Government Finance Statewide Certification Process Frequently Asked Questions February 2007**

1. Will the Department post on its web-site a list of vendors that have been certified in tax, billing and assessment functions? If so, will the list note what piece has been certified?

Answer: Yes, a list of certified vendors will be posted on the DLGF website along with the functionality for which their software has been certified.

2. Will there be other opportunities for vendors to meet with the Department to raise any questions or concerns they have with the certification process?

Answer: Periodic meetings with vendors will be scheduled throughout the certification period. Vendors will be notified as meeting dates are set. Vendors are also welcome to submit questions and concerns at any time to [VendorInfo@dlgf.in.gov](mailto:VendorInfo@dlgf.in.gov).

3. What is the Department's web-site address so I can check the status of a particular vendor?

Answer: The Department's web-site address is <http://www.in.gov/dlgf/>. In addition to vendor status, the web-site provides other important certification information including the certification rule, test data, test scenarios, certification facts, and frequently asked questions.

4. If a vendor wants the Department to come to their place of business for testing purposes, are they required to reimburse the State for travel expenses?

Answer: If for convenience purposes the Department or its designee is required to travel to the Vendor's location, the Vendor would be responsible for reimbursing the State for associated travel expenses. Estimates of the expenses would be discussed and agreed upon prior to any on-site visitation.

5. Is there a fee for the certification process?

Answer: No, the Department does not charge a fee for the certification process.

6. As part of the certification process, will vendors be ranked by the Department in terms of quality, price and other factors?

Answer: No. The Department's certification process is intended to ensure that vendors meet the requirements described in the certification rule. For other factors, counties, as the customers and primary users of the software, are in a better position than the Department to determine which product(s) are best suited given their particular user needs, budgetary limitations, and specific computing environments.

7. Does the certification process need to be face-to face if the software is a web-based solution?

Answer: The use of web demonstrations will certainly be entertained. The Department intends to work with vendors to ensure that certification testing is conducted in a manner that is convenient for all parties involved while fulfilling the intent of the certification process.

8. Will the Department assist in de-bugging software?

Answer: No. The Department expects that software submitted for testing will have successfully completed debugging. Certification is aimed at vendors demonstrating their products' functionality rather than identifying their products' issues.

9. How often must a vendor recertify its software? If the answer is after a major change, what is considered a major change?

Answer: Recertification is required after a major change, either in the software or in the requirements described in the certification rule. The certification rule (23-27-1(c)) defines a major change as a significant alteration in the operation of the computer system or any other change that would cause the computer system not to comply with this article. The Department also anticipates modifying the certification rule 50 IAC 23 to require certification upon major changes to the rule and certification requirements or at the Department's discretion.

10. What does a vendor do if a county does not recognize the three places past the decimal point on its parcel numbering system?

Answer: If the software does not accommodate the full parcel numbering format prescribed in (23-8-1(2)(E)), the system will not be in compliance. If a County chooses not to use the digits in question, they should remain all zeroes.

11. Could special cases or exceptions result in a revocation of a vendor certification?

Answer: Yes. It is difficult to anticipate specifically what special cases or exceptions could result in revocation of a vendor's certification. In general, any non-compliance discovered after certification or recertification could result in revocation of a vendor's certification.

12. Does a county have to bid for vendor contracts?

Answer: The certification process does not replace the requirement that counties must bid based on the dollar value of the purchase. After fall of 2008, vendors will no longer be able to bid if they have been certified by the Department.

13. Will the Department issue provisional certifications?

Answer: No, the Department will not issue provisional certifications for any vendor.

14. Are counties limited to the file format structure as presented in the rule?

Answer: The standard file formats specify the minimum data requirements for integration of applications and for data transmission to the state. Counties and their vendors are free to create other formats and to collect and store additional data elements. However, data transmitted to the state must be in the standard file format structure. The file formats must be a standard software feature enabling counties to produce the standard file formats at any time without vendor intervention or cost.

15. In Phase 2 of the certification process, is a vendor demonstrating that they can accommodate files? Do they have to partner with another vendor to illustrate the complete assessment, tax and billing process?

Answer: In Phase 2, vendors must demonstrate their functionality in terms of producing and accepting standard files. This could be done independently, although from a marketing and customer perspective it may be useful to demonstrate application interoperability through multiple vendors working together.

16. From a vendor perspective, what incentive is there for a county to select multiple vendors?

Answer: Counties have varying preferences and needs based on size, types and mix of property, sales volume, etc. To date, no one vendor has offered a software application that supports the entire property tax management process meeting Indiana's certification standards. It is up to individual counties to determine whether a single vendor or multiple vendor best-of-breed solutions best meets their needs.